Collectors for realisation of the outstanding dues as arrears of land revenue;

(2) 158 prosecution cases under section 14 of the EPF Act have been filed against defaulting establishments; and

(3) 6 complaints have been filed under section 406|409 IPC against the employers who had deducted the contribution from the wages of the employees but not deposited the same.

Indo-Czechoslovakia Protocol

2331. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any protocol between India and Czechoslovakia has recently been signed; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The 1986 Trade Protocol with Czechoslovakia provides for a trade turnover on a balanced basis of Rs. 467 crores. The Protocol covers supplies of rolled steel products, diesel generating sets, seamless pipes, tubes and castings, machine tools, ball bearings, fertilizers etc. by Czechoslovakia. Indian exports would mainly consists of agricultural products, textiles, minerals and ores, engineering goods, leather and leather manufactures, chemicals and allied products and other miscellaneous goods.

Time-limit for payment of Provident Fund

2332. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any time-limit has been fixed within which the provident fund dues of employees who retire or who die while in service are to be paid by mills|factories|business establishments; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether employers can withhold the payment of provident fund dues; if so, the grounds on which the provident fund dues can be withheld and the period for which these can be withheld?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI T. ANJAIAH): (a) According to the existing administrative instructions, the provident fund dues of employees who retire or die while in service of a factory|establishment covered under the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 are normally required to be paid within 20 days of the receipt of the application, in the prescribed forms, from the nominee|legal heir|family members of the deceased employee or from the retired employee.

(b) The provident fund dues which have become payable to member himself or the nominee|heir of deceased members cannot be withheld by employers, for any reason whatsoever.

Payment of D.A. to Central Government Employees

2333. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is also a fact that one more instalment of Dearness Allowence has become due with effect from 1st November, 1985 for payment to the Central Government Employees;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be paid; and

(c) whether Government have issued orders for the payment of Dearness Allowances instalment which became due on the 1st August, 1985; if not, what are the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) Consequent upon the average consumer price index reaching 601.58 at the end of October, 1985, one instalment of Dearness Allowance has become due for consideration w.e.f. 1-11-1985.

(b) and (c) Payment of each instalment of Dearness Allowance to Central Government employees and relief to pensioners costs the exchequer approximately Rs. 70 crores and Rs. 8 crores per annum respectively. Therefore, the question of payment of each instalment of Dearness Allowance has to be considered carefully with regard to their impact on the economic situation and the budget. The question of payment of this instalment is receiving the attention of the Government.

Amalgamation/merger of MMTC, NMDC and STC

2334. SHRI N. E. BALRAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to amalgamate/merge the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation (MMTC), the National Minerals Development Corporation (NMDC) and the State Trading Corporation (STC) or any two of these three Corporations together; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) and (b) No decision has been taken to amalgamate/merge MMTC, NMDC and STC or any two of these three Corporations.

Losses suffered by the Indian Tourism Development Corporation

2335. SHRI N. E. BALRAM: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in 'Onlooker', a fortnightly (16-30 November, 1985) published from Bombay captioned 'ITDC: the Rs. 777.12 lakh bungle' and also to the news-item in the Illustrated Weekly of India (10-16 November, 1985) captioned 'ITDC in a Quagmire';

(b) if so, whether Government have set up a Fact Finding Committee to go into the instances of huge losses/irregularities in different departments/projects of ITDC as detailed in the above magazines;

(c) what steps Government have taken to fix responsibility on the officials responsible for such huge losses/irregularities and the steps taken to avoid recurrence of such instances in future;

(d) whether Government propose to get investigated the activities of ITDC from some Government agency or through some Parliamentary Committee; and

(e) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS TOURISM (SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. The ITDC has reported that both the news-items are exaggerated. The allegations contained in said issue of the 'Onlooker' are subject matters of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India to whom necessary clarifications have been given. The ITDC Management also took up the matter with the Editor of the Illstrated Weekly who has agreed to issue suitable clarifications in due course.

Contracts signed at the India International Trade Fair

2336. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the India International Trade Fair held in New Delhi in November, 1985 has yielded a number of contracts between India and many other countries; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the contracts signed between India and other countries along with the amounts/involved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) and (b) It will take some time to ascertain the details from the participating countries/organisations.